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in the first place the exigencies of nature: the flood with its opportunities for fishing and the pursuit of small game; the heat of the early North-West season when the grass-burning will go forward and great hunting parties assemble; the long dry spell when the villagers must turn to making sago, or go down to a fishing camp, the streams being then at their shallowest.

There are also the many new activities, not always welcome, which Government control has occasioned. The village must clear its allotted span of track with every moon; the passing of an officer means a turn out of carriers (and the Orokaiva are reputed to be as sturdy and cheerful as any in the Territory); and the approach of a patrol means a mild bustle of diligence in which the village must be made to look its best for fear of magisterial wrath. Again the Plantations scheme and the presence of a supervising officer mean labour of a somewhat new kind, which for those who live from hand to mouth seems irksome because unrepaid by immediate returns.

Now and again the recruiter of native labour passes, lays out his trade for those who will bargain to go with him, and leaves perhaps with a batch of young men to 'sign-on' for European employment. But the sadness of parting, however real, is not more moving than the demonstrative welcome at the labourer's home-coming, when his women folk, who threw themselves down and beat their foreheads on the ground for sorrow at his going, do the same again with equal violence for joy at his return.

Apart from these sources of interest, and from events of birth, marriage, and death, and again from the more startling incidents of thefts, quarrels, and occasional murders which are all but necessary to any human society, native life is varied by a number of festive and ceremonial occasions which constitute a very important part of it.

Not a few of these are associated with the rites of mourning and with the placation of the beings who survive death. When a death occurs mourners, summoned by long blasts of the trumpet, gather from far and wide to the scene and give themselves with what one suspects to be almost joyful abandon to the indulgence of grief. The house of the dead

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is thronged with mud-smeared wailers and the corpse is hardly to be seen for those who are mauling and caressing it for the last time. The funeral, despite the undeniably genuine sorrow of the mourners, even of those who are but remotely connected with the deceased, is not without redeeming features. The mourners disperse with the satisfaction of having performed a necessary rite, of having participated with a crowd of their fellows in an exercise of emotion, and of having been well feasted.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to give any detailed description of mortuary ceremonies, nor of the rites of seclusion and initiation with their spectacular *finale*, when the youths and girls emerge as 'new children' bedecked with feather head-dresses and loaded with crude but magnificent ornaments of shell and ivory. All ceremonies, however, are accompanied by feasting, for the primitive virtue of liberality is not less strong among the Orokaiva than others. Food will have been gathered from the gardens and bountifully displayed on platforms. The guests, arriving in their several parties, come striding single file into the village, each party headed by its man of first importance, befeathered club on shoulder. No smile adorns his face, but rather an expression of fierceness, which, however unsuited it may seem to the hospitable occasion, is nevertheless Orokaiva good form. Tempestuous shouts of welcome greet the visitors, which they accept without a flicker of weak-minded gratification, unless it be on the part of some silly girl; and so they file majestically through the village until they reach the place allotted them, when they seat themselves somewhat abruptly and relax into a more sociable attitude. Meanwhile, the women have been busy at peeling and chopping the taro, and the pots are cooking in rows. If it be an occasion of any importance the pigs are slaughtered and, having been dismembered, lie in reeking heaps on the high platform where the butchering is performed in rather studied publicity. The stench may soon be almost nauseating to a European, though to Orokaiva nostrils it has no doubt a pleasant and promising savour. An onlooker who would appreciate the gaiety and charm of the scene must not be too fastidious.

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291 [531] designs in red, brown, and black is not unbecoming. A good specimen may be regarded much as a party frock, and a woman is fully conscious of being well dressed when she wears it. It is amusing to see an old dame in expectation of a visit dart into her house and reappear in her best piece of bark-cloth. Growing older the garment grows softer and dirtier and loses all claim to beauty.

Among the Bush and Salt-Water People the woman's *bo* is worn from puberty onwards; among the River People only from marriage onwards. Nowadays a new sense of modesty in the presence of white men has altered this, but one may still occasionally see fully-developed young women among the Aiga or Binandele who go quite naked and without any trace of shame. The assumption of the *bo* by girls as well as boys will be referred to in a later chapter. A few examples of patterned bark-cloth are shown in the accompanying illustration. The method of beating the cloth and painting it are described under 'Arts of Life' (pp. 77–8).

[765] The palm-leaf petticoat, commonly known by the Motuan name *rami*, is found as a sign of mourning among the Dirou tribe and on the lower Opi (see p. 222 n.). It is also reported at Lake Koena without any suggestion that it is restricted to mourning;[1] and further as worn by the Yema at Bovera on the Eia, where the older women use it as the proper dress of their people, while the younger have adopted the bark-cloth skirt of their Binandele neighbours.[2]

292 *The Bark-cloth Hat, Pobu.* The heads of old men are sometimes covered with a small sheet of bark-cloth called *pobu*. It encloses the mass of their hair, and falls over the back. Usually ragged and greasy, the *pobu* is no ornament but yet a mark of age and importance. No young man is seen wearing this unsightly rag. He would be at once too vain of his appearance and too modest to assume a headgear that is the prerogative of age.

292 589 *The Widow's Cowl.* Upon her emergence from seclusion the widow wears a cowl-shaped headgear, also called *pobu*. This, as she hangs her head, conceals her whole face and

[1] Beaver, *Annual Report*, 1914–15, p. 14.
[2] F. R. Cawley, *Annual Report*, 1922–3, p. 25.

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lead pencil which fall about his shoulders something in the manner of the Chief Justice's wig. Notwithstanding grease and dirt, it is a distinctly becoming mode, particularly when to the profusion of his locks he adds the tassels of red-dyed *kapiya*, the transparent skin that lines the inner side of the areca spathe. To an Orokaiva his hair is assuredly felt to be a crowning glory, though it is often far from being the well-trimmed and flowing mass that I have pictured. His head is sometimes scraggy and sometimes even bald—a state which is regarded with curious aversion and attributed to some early indiscretion or ceremonial neglect.

The hair is cut short in mourning, and sometimes as a last desperate measure to free it from lice. In the former case it is an example of the self-sacrifice or self-castigation which is so common in sorrow, though a man may allow himself a little decorative effect as compensation for the loss (*vide* concentric circles on Plate XXVII). Nowadays many wear their hair short for mere convenience.

A woman's hair is dressed in the same way as a man's while she is young, i.e. with tags and red streamers. At marriage she is likely, though not bound, to cut it short; and when she has borne a child or two she will certainly do so. This I am assured is a case of modesty: a matron does not care to masquerade as a 'flapper' (and the same reason is given for the fact that married women wear comparatively few ornaments). Some informants have also suggested that a husband does not care to see his wife make herself too attractive to other men, and others that a mass of long hair interferes with the carrying of the *eti*, or string bag for taro.

Natives are clean-shaven except for some old men and some who have allowed their beards to grow in mourning. The beard is never of very strong growth. Nowadays moustaches are commonly copied from the white man and especially affected by those who have served in the Armed Constabulary. Shaving is done with a glass fragment (formerly one of quartz); with twisted fibres; and by plucking out the hairs with a bivalve for tweezers.

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Reasons for Raiding

721 The reasons for the inter-clan fighting are easy to understand: they are in the main nothing more than quarrels between hot-blooded neighbours. The reasons for the deliberate raid or *isoro*, which involves cannibalism, are not so obvious. Very commonly the raid was meant to avenge [602] some previous victim, for vengeance was absolutely imperative to the relatives of a slain man; and the expression for revenge itself is an interesting one, viz. *diroga-mine*, or an 'exchange of *diroga*', the latter meaning the spirit of a man slain in fight in contradistinction to the spirit of one who has died in any other way. Instances of compounding are apparently rare, and it may be (though I cannot speak with certainty) that the practice of compounding for death [628] obtains between clans only, and not between tribes. The compensation or blood-price, consisting of pigs and ornaments, is called *dorobu*, which word stands also for marriage payment. Between tribes, however, who normally stand in the mutual relation of *kitobu* it would seem that such amicable settlement is rare if not impossible. To show how im- [165] perative is the need for revenge I may mention the former rule that the widow of a man slain by an enemy tribe must continue her seclusion until the capture and killing of a man from that tribe made it possible for her to emerge from it.

I cannot find any binding ceremonial necessity for a raid other than the one just mentioned (and that is really a reason for returning a raid, not for making one in the first [585] place). It appears that the corpses of victims were used in payment for marriage, either *a-dorobu* or *bi-dorobu*, or for gifts between relatives. But this was probably a matter of convenience: I have no evidence that a corpse was *necessarily* part of the marriage payment. Then again there is the [881] matter of homicidal insignia. Although these are sometimes called *otobu* in common with the *otobu* given at initiation (*vide* pp. 201 ff.), it is not to be supposed that the latter were necessarily homicidal, i.e. that the killing of an enemy was demanded before a youth or girl could pass through the ceremony of receiving an *otobu*. In short, I do not know of

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XIII

CEREMONIES OF MOURNING

BEFORE commencing a full account of mortuary ceremonies it will be as well to anticipate by a summary to which the reader may turn back for reference in the course of a long and perhaps bewildering description.

(1) First comes the ceremonies of actual burial, which are followed by the widow's seclusion (pp. 210 ff.; 215 ff.).

(2) The widow emerges from her seclusion and assumes the jacket which is the special sign of mourning (pp. 218 ff.).

(3) The widow discards her mourning jacket, and the other mourners give up the voluntary tabus they have undergone (pp. 224 ff.). After a protracted general tabu on the food supplies, there follows,

(4) An important ceremonial feast and dance, accompanied among the northern tribes by a dramatic performance.

(5) The last of the mortuary ceremonies is the ritual disposal of the paraphernalia of this dance and drama (p. 253).

These five stages or landmarks may be separated from one another by intervals of many months. In the course of the present chapter and the next, continual reference will be made to them in order to keep the sequence of events clearly before the reader. The fourth and fifth stages will be dealt with under Dance and Drama, Chapter XIV.

Death and Burial

When death occurs in an Orokaiva village the women burst into loud lamentations, and rush to the nearest swamp to bedaub themselves with mud. Sometimes they mistake coma for death, and the dead man awakes in the midst of the lamentations. Sometimes—one might say usually—they begin wailing as soon as they are convinced that the patient is sinking and death is not far off.

I well remember such a scene about a dying infant. The poor child—if it retained consciousness enough to care—might well have been annoyed by a deafening clamour of

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(*a*) Hair shaved in Mourning.
Not an usual mode

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(*b*) The *Bakuri* or Exposure Platform for the Corpse

PLATE XXVII [facing p. 212]

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537 ment to those who have mourned for you.' The 'road of
776 the sunshine' (*iji-deita*) was said (when I asked where it was) to be in the east, and the 'road of the rains' in the west, where there are great downpours on the slopes of the Central Range; but it may be said very emphatically that there is no idea of a general Paradise or Elysium in the east, but only of various scattered *sovai-ta-na* or 'villages of the spirits', which are usually in fairly close proximity to the villages of the living. The contrast between sunshine and rain really points to the desired contrast between cheerfulness and gloom, not to that between east and west.

The spear and the handful of ornaments are presented—only in form—to the dead, and he is adjured to present them in turn to the other *sovai* whom he is to meet. He is told to announce his name to them, and the name of his father, to call upon them 'to make way for him, to blow the trumpet, beat the drums, and prepare a feast', and he will hand them these as, it would appear, conciliatory gifts.

764 When this address is concluded the body is lowered into
152 the grave. The women who are still clinging about it must first be dragged or thrown aside, and this is done by one or two young men with a roughness which is not inexcusable. The grave is only partly filled, and the earth stamped down. In the shallow depression which remains the mourners throw themselves down—as many as can find a place—and veritably wallow in their grief. They almost jostle for position, so much so that I have seen a bereaved husband compelled to push and shoulder his way through a throng of mourners to secure a place at the grave of his wife.

Mourning Seclusion

765 It is customary among all the tribes for a widow to go into seclusion for some time after her husband's death. In certain tribes the widower is also secluded under similar circumstances, but as this latter custom is not universal I shall in the following section deal solely with the seclusion of the widow.

When the excitement—for such it is—of the funeral has died away, the widow (*doru*) of the deceased is left, perhaps

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765 with one or two other women, at his grave. Formerly the
[764] grave was under the house of the deceased; now by Government regulation it is in the bush at some distance from the village. It is natural that the natives should do their best to evade this regulation, because the custom of burial under the house is no doubt based on sentiment. Informants
765 repeatedly state that they dislike burying their dead at a
152 distance because they are sad or 'belly-sore'. I have also heard that they dislike the thought of a grave neglected and overgrown; but the principal idea is, as informants have stated it to be, that the living cannot bear the parting with the dead. They cling as long as they can even to his inanimate presence. Sometimes in these days the dead are actually buried in the village, though if the fact is discovered or betrayed, the mourners are likely to work out their sorrow in gaol. More commonly the difficulty is overcome by a rather pathetic subterfuge. The grave is placed in the bush not far from the village, and a small house is built over it in which the widow secludes herself, just as in former times she would have been secluded over her husband's grave in her own house. When a Government patrol draws near, the grave shelter is of course empty.

765 The widow's seclusion is a long one, and the greater part of it she spends in her own house, i.e. that of her deceased husband. It is not clear when she is transferred from the grave shelter to the house, though it appears that this may be made the occasion of a feast. (Regarding this feast I have very little information, but it is of minor consequence at any rate, and cannot, I think, be regarded as a regular feature of the cycle of mortuary ceremonies.) While in the shelter the widow sleeps actually in the grave, above the corpse of her husband, which is covered only with a shallow
765 layer of earth. I am told that she will from time to time
775 burrow with her fingers in the earth, and whenever she discovers some maggots (*kanyeni*) she will carry them off and deposit them in one place in the bush nearby. Here they accumulate and disappear, being supposedly transformed into the *sovai* of the deceased. I do not know whether this belief and practice (which I found among the Aiga) are of

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general distribution. At any rate they illustrate only one of the theories as to the transformation of human beings into *sovai*. It is after this disagreeable rite has been performed that the widow moves from the grave shelter to the house, or in former times, we may assume, from the ground under the house to the living room above.

It is the general rule for the widow to be secluded in the house of her husband, though in some instances it appears that the house in which the deceased lived is tabu, being avoided on account of fear. But such cases are evidently exceptional. In the event of evacuation it was not the custom to destroy the house but to leave it, probably surrounded by a tabu string. A house is left when it is thought to be 'haunted' by a *sovai*, and it is not only in a house of recent death that this supposed situation can arise. I have known a young married pair abandon a house because their baby was continually ailing, a fact which they attributed to the presence of a *sovai*. Similarly a whole village may be deserted if its inhabitants get the idea into their heads that it is haunted by malignant spirits.

It is only upon the widow, not upon the other womenfolk of the deceased, that rigid seclusion is enforced; though a mother will voluntarily remain for a long time at the grave of her child. In some tribes the widower undergoes seclusion. This is so, I understand, in the Wasida, Sangara, Sauaha, Yega, and Tain-Daware tribes. Among the Aiga and the Binandele he is not secluded. Of the other tribes I have no reliable information.

During seclusion the widow (or the widower) is engaged in making the mourning jacket *baja*—so called because it is made of *baja* (*coix lachrimae* seeds, or Job's Tears). She has no other work to do. She receives frequent friendly visits from the women of the village, who make her presents of food and assist her to make the *baja*, for which the seeds are gathered by her son or some relative of the deceased. She is not seen by the villagers, and her voice is supposed to remain unheard. Indeed, while living for some months in a village rest-house I was completely unaware that a widow was secluded in the house opposite, and that

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765 not more than thirty yards away. The reason given for the long seclusion of widowhood was the curious one of 'shame' (*meb*). The woman, it would appear from this explanation, cannot bear to face the people of the village; though I cannot believe that it is merely her grief which she is afraid of showing, for natives are not in the habit of hiding this emotion.

'Gorukari': Ending the Seclusion

The widow's seclusion comes to an end with a feast and a ceremony called *gorukari*. This, it will be remembered, marks the second stage in the cycle of mortuary ceremonies (*vide* p. 210).

765 When, in former times, the widow's husband had been
628 slain by an enemy tribe, her seclusion must continue till
a victim had been secured from that tribe; and it was the
[266] corpse of this victim which constituted the *pièce de résistance* of the feast. She was compelled to remain in seclusion till revenge was satisfied. In the fable where a crocodile de-
765 vours a man, his wife goes into seclusion immediately; but when on the following day her son captures the crocodile and drags it to the house, she comes down, stands on the creature's body, and cries, 'Why did you take my man?'; and then the people dance the *kuru* dance, and her seclusion is over.

In peaceful modern times the victims would be unprocurable, and by the same token the necessity for them does not arise. The seclusion, therefore, is brought to an end when there is a suitable accumulation of food, and its duration is correspondingly variable. The feast on this occasion is called *pusu-ijuka*, lit. 'the counting of the mud', i.e. the reckoning by which the *pusu-embo* (p. 211) are paid for their efforts at the funeral. The people of the deceased husband provide the bulk of the provisions for this feast, but they are assisted by the people of the widow. All the mourners who paid the deceased the final compliment of bedaubing themselves with mud, of wailing, or of digging his grave, are invited to receive their 'payment'; but relatives on both husband's and wife's side will contribute. Apart, however,

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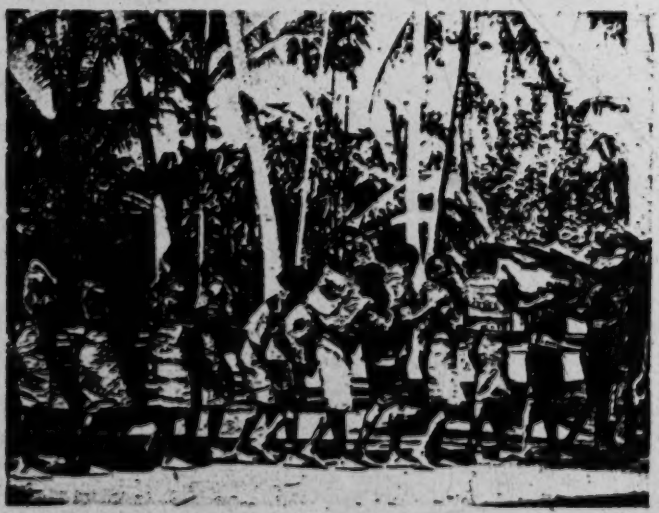
(*a*) First stage of the *Gorukari* or Emergence of the Widow from Seclusion



(*b*) Second stage of the *Gorukari*

PLATE XXIX

[facing p 218]

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765 from this paying of the nondescript body of mourners to which both groups contribute, it is evident that on the occasion of the *gorukari* the people of the deceased husband make some payment of food to those of the widow. In fact, amid some confusion of evidence it appears that it is virtually the people of the deceased husband who provide the feast which makes it possible for the widow to emerge from seclusion.

A few days prior to the actual *gorukari*, or emergence of the widow, the principal man of the village performs an interesting rite called *jage* or 'hailing'. Soon after dusk the people of the village are assembled, the younger men holding drums and standing in readiness for a dance. Now, while all maintain a tense silence, the chief man raises his voice and in long-drawn notes cries out the name of the deceased. There is heard an inarticulate reply from somewhere in the bush, and the old man then continues in the same sounding tones to bid the deceased to be present and witness the descent of his widow from the house of seclusion, and to witness the feast and dance. Then the drums strike up and the youths begin the *kuru* dance. The old man and the listening villagers appear to be fully satisfied that they hear the voice of the deceased, and, indeed, it is regarded as essential, for failing the encouragement of a reply the *gorukari* could not go on. I witnessed the performance of this rite on two occasions. On one of them I confess I heard nothing that resembled an answer from the bush, though the villagers declared they did, and seemed fully satisfied. On the other occasion there was a very distinct reply, an inarticulate halloo, which seemed louder than any echo I had heard in the neighbourhood. I could only conclude that a man had posted himself some distance away in the bush; but it is worth adding that this mundane explanation was laughed to ridicule by the natives present, and no one confessed to having played the part of the deceased.

A number of people will have assembled to witness this formal reappearance of the widow, or *doru*. As so often on such occasions one and the same ceremony may suffice for a number of candidates, so that several *doru* who have been

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secluded in the neighbourhood may come out simultaneously. They are brought together in one house which is surrounded by a barricade of palm leaves. Here they are attended by a number of women and girls who spend the morning in decorating themselves behind the concealment of the barrier. Four men, who are to assist in the ceremony, also array themselves in full dancing-dress. Soon after midday, when the waiting spectators have already been entertained with a small feast, a few palm leaves are suddenly wrenched away, and in the gap there appear two of the men squatting on their heels and tapping their drums. Behind them is a long single file of kneeling women with two more men bringing up the rear. They all advance slowly, the women on their knees, the men shuffling on the soles of their feet. The *doru*, who wear their jackets of *baja*, are placed in the centre of the line. They cling to one another, or to the women in front of them, and are in turn supported by the women behind them. They wear a voluminous hood or cowl (*pobu*) of bark-cloth embroidered with Job's Tears, and they hang their heads so that their faces are invisible. Having crawled forward in this manner for some twelve or fifteen yards they all rise to their feet, and, without increasing their pace, proceed to follow a semicircular course through the village. Then the four men withdraw, and the women sit down in a group on some palm leaves which have been laid ready. In their midst are the *doru*, their heads hung low, and their faces completely veiled with the *pobu* cowls.

The whole ceremony is somewhat melancholy. The line moves very slowly, the *doru* dragging their feet and leaning heavily for support on the women in front of them. The spectators are seated in a wide half-moon, tapping drums very softly, and now and then intoning a solemn low-pitched '*O*——, *O*——!' But this solemn performance may be succeeded by a dance, which of course gives a new complexion to the scene. On one such occasion which I witnessed, the dancers made their appearance somewhat prematurely, breaking cover at the edge of the village with an inspiring thunder of drums. One of the principals rushed forward dramatically waving them back, but, disregarding

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him, the dance swept into the village, while the solemn *gorukari* procession went steadily on. In this case the *doru* were helped on to a house verandah, and the younger girls in the procession turned hastily to join in the more animated and attractive entertainment of the dance. Throughout the rest of the day, which witnessed a dance, a dramatic performance, and a feast, the *doru* (of whom there were three) sat on the house verandah without as much as raising their heads to see what was going on.

After this ceremonial emergence the seclusion of the *doru* is over. She continues to wear the *baja*, but may come and go at her ordinary work. She is free to marry again, and marriage may take place before the later ceremony in which the *baja* is discarded. It is said that the halting gait of the widow and her clinging for support upon her neighbour are due to the weakness of her legs after long seclusion; though if we feel inclined to accept such an explanation it must be merely symbolic. The gradual assumption of an upright gait, however, marks in some manner the caution which the native regards as essential in all transition stages. The hiding of the *doru's* face is again attributed to the *meb*, or shame, which was said to be the reason of seclusion in general.

I was assured that among the southern tribes, who practise seclusion of the widower, there was no ceremonial emergence: the widower's legs were supposed to stand the strain of inactivity and he walked out of his seclusion unassisted. But this cannot be altogether correct, for Mr. Wurth has described, in reference to the Eroro district, a solemn procession in single file, each individual resting his hands on the shoulders of the person in front of him, and the widower wearing the mourning jacket of Job's Tears—in fact a ceremonial that corresponds in all essentials to the emergence of the widow.

Signs and Observances of Mourning

The widow continues to wear her jacket of *baja* (*vide* p. 217), and among the coastal people she smears her face and limbs with mud, which dries white and gives her a sufficiently ghastly appearance. (I have not noted in detail

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765 292 [302] the distribution of this latter custom, but it is not practised among the Aiga or the Binandele.)) The *baja* jacket is worn also by the widower, and various relatives of the deceased bear Job's Tears about their persons as a sign of mourning, sometimes in the form of jackets, sometimes merely as [301] armlets or neck ornaments. The seeds appear to be of two varieties, pale grey or fawn, and with the addition of red and black seeds the *baja* jacket may be very effectively decorated. Except in the case of the widow, it appears that the *baja* may be put off at will: a man will wear it when he 'walks about', and doff it when he works. It is, in fact, rather in the nature of an ornament than of sack-cloth and ashes. However, I have been informed—quite gratuitously—that the *asisi* of the dead is in some manner immanent in the *baja*.

The hood (*pobu*) is either of bark-cloth or of netted string, in either case thickly embroidered with the seeds. A fish-net may be used for the purpose, or the *betava*, i.e. string bag, which belonged to the dead man, and which now figures as a memento.[1]

765 301 There are many minor indications of mourning. A woman will wear mementoes of her husband such as a thick necklet made from his *bo* rolled as if into a rope and covered with *baja*, or a series of pendants—a fragment of the pot in which his food was cooked, a chip of the tree he chopped, his coco-nut spoon, his leglet, a tuft of his hair; and a widower may wear his late wife's taro peeler or her bodkin of flying-fox bone. A recognized symbol of mourning is a necklet of large white beads formed of cooked taro which has hardened. A man will wear a beard and cut his hair 765 short in mourning. Both these practices are in the nature of 302 self-castigation, for the Orokaiva fancy a glabrous beauty, and if a man have long head-hair it is felt to be a glory. In one case (to which I have previously drawn attention)

[1] An interesting mark of mourning is the *vuni* or skirt of palm leaf. This is by no means universal, but is found in the Dirou tribe (where it is of coco-nut), and among the people of the lower Opi (where it is of pandanus). In regard to the latter people, it is said that the women of an earlier population, associated with a semi-mythical character, Bubugarere, all wore palm-leaf skirts; but that they dispersed, some to the north and some to the south, so that nowadays these skirts are to be seen on the one hand on the river Waria and on the other about Cape Nelson.

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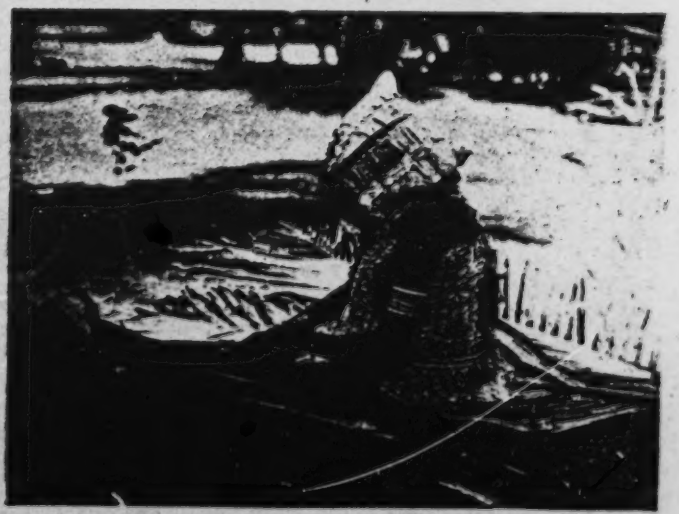
(*a*) The Widow sitting among her attendants



(*b*) The Widow, showing *Baja* jacket and *Pabu*

PLATE XXX [facing p. 222]

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a man had shaved his hair in mourning for his brother, but left a series of concentric rings; but this, which had a distinctly decorative, and, as the circles were slightly askew, an almost jaunty effect, was, I imagine, quite unusual. Women, who in the excess of their grief hack at themselves with jagged quartz, often bear permanent raised scars on their breasts or shoulders.

Formerly it was the custom to cut down one or more of the coco-nut palms belonging to the deceased. This is now prohibited by the Government, but it appears that the rule was always adjustable to circumstances: if a man had many dependents and few coco-nuts it was not carried out. The felling of palms is only an example of the destruction of some part of the property of the deceased, which is attributed to the *jo*, or sorrow, of his survivors. Pots, for instance, or wooden dishes are dashed to the ground and broken. 'He ate from this dish,' they say, 'therefore we break it'; or 'he ate the fruit of this palm, therefore we cut it down'. I have never heard it suggested that the utensils or the palms were in any way unclean or dangerous. The reason for the destruction is always said to be *jo*. It may be another instance of the native's habit of punishing himself in sorrow, or simply a method of letting off steam: the pots may be smashed in a fury of grief, just as wine-glasses are sometimes smashed in ebullitions of a more joyous emotion.

However that may be, I think there is enough in the severity of the native's mourning observances—so much severer than our own—to argue the sincerity of his grief. I may refer lastly to the self-denying tabu of mourning. Such a self-inflicted abstinence is called *bajai*. The mourner may abstain from pig-flesh, taro, tobacco, or betel, &c., or dispense with such articles as a painted *bo* or a string bag. These are very serious deprivations to an Orokaiva. Once more the native is punishing himself in his sorrow. One finds a man, for instance, who voluntarily does without his *betawa*, or string bag, that veritable *vade mecum* which is the receptacle for the lime gourd and many other indispensables. His *nabori*, he may tell you, used to help himself in a friendly way to the betel-nuts and lime pot in the *betawa*;

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765 152 now that his *nabori* is dead he will make do without a *betava*, and carry his lime pot in his hand. Another, who used to dance in a pair with his brother, has forsworn dancing after his brother's death. Another, who used to act as a clown in the plays with his brother (while the latter lived), has given up this also.

Discarding the Signs of Mourning

765 We may now turn to the third stage in the mortuary cycle (*vide* p. 210). Such tabus or *bajai*, as have been described above, are not for ever, but come to an end with a formal ceremony called *tepurukari*, which means literally 'forsake', or 'abandon'. (Another word applied to it is *ate-ate*, which we saw in connexion with the somewhat similar rite described on pp. 192–3.) The mourner makes a payment to an immediate relative of the deceased, and is in return formally relieved of his tabu. He is, for instance, presented with a new *betava*, and may thenceforward use it; or he is presented with the conventional costume of a clown, and may thenceforward act his part. When the tabu is upon some particular food a peculiar rite (to which perhaps the term *ate-ate* applies more specifically) brings it to a formal conclusion. The subject holds his hands, palms downward and fingers interlocked, before his breast, while a little of the tabued food is placed upon them. This he throws backwards over his head, and the tabu is at an end.

The discarding of these *bajai* or tabus is properly made to coincide with the more notable ceremony of discarding the *baja*, which marks the third stage in the series of mortuary ceremonies. As, at the assumption of the *baja*, the feast was provided mainly by the husband's people, so on the occasion of discarding it the feast is provided mainly by the widow's people, who pay a pig to those of the husband, and make over to them the *baja* which the widow has been wearing.

Before the actual ceremony the widow, I am told, goes again to the grave of her husband, taps the ground with her foot, and cries out that she is soon to discard her mourning jacket. Later, when the pig has been slain at the feast, the woman takes off the *baja* and places it on the animal's body.

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It is finally wrapped up with some of the fat and entrails and buried. In other cases it is hung up in the garden of the deceased and there left to rot in the sun and rain. This garden has been allowed to fall to rack and ruin since his death: none of its products have been eaten, though the young taro shoots may be transplanted to a new plot. In the Wasida dialect the word *kisa* was applied to such a garden. It appears that in this case the neglect of the garden was less a self-denying tabu than due to an actual fear of evil consequences—such as sore eyes, tooth decay, skinniness—if its products were eaten. And it is noteworthy that such effects would be felt only by the immediate relatives of the dead. It was possible, in fact, to make an exchange of gardens, so that the bereaved relatives would not be left without resources, the *kisa* garden being passed over to one who would take no harm from it, and another being given in exchange to the relatives of the dead. The evil potency of the *kisa* garden is apparently attributed to the malignant spirits of the dead—an explanation for which I have the direct testimony of one informant, although in many other cases it remained inexplicit. It is in keeping with the belief (which is a basis for a system of divination, cf. p. 281) that the dead revisit or haunt their gardens, and in general with the fear which the Orokaiva feels for his deceased relatives *qua sovai*. Among the various mourning tabus which have come to my notice, however, this, viz. the forbidding of the garden to the relatives of the deceased, was the only instance in which the motive was apparently one of fear. All the others were rather manifestations of sorrow.

The Naterari, or Tabu Post

The fourth major mortuary ceremony is a dance, which among the Aiga and Binandele is accompanied by a dramatic performance. The fifth is the ritual disposal of certain materials used in the fourth ceremony. Now I do not believe that the dance and drama are purely and wholly a mortuary ceremony, but that they are at least partly so appears from the facts that the dead are called upon to witness the proceedings, and that, when the proceedings are over, certain

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765 paraphernalia connected with the dead are ceremonially and
535 finally disposed of. On the other hand, the dance and drama
836 have their own intrinsic value as forms of art and amusement, and, furthermore, they commonly occur in connexion with the initiation and seclusion of a number of youths and girls.

765 The whole subject of dance and drama, however, will be
784 discussed in the next chapter. In the meantime I shall deal
778 with the tabu upon the food-supply which precedes the fourth stage, and which makes possible the large feast which is perhaps the most important feature of the proceedings in so far as they are of a mourning nature. The mark of this tabu is the *naterari* or tabu post, which has already been referred to in Chapter VIII, p. 117. As we saw there, it usually takes the form of a rough-hewn pillar or post, standing a few feet high in the open space of the village. Properly speaking it is made of the *beratu* wood of the clan; but when the *beratu* is not of a suitably solid nature the *naterari* may consist merely of a piece of light timber called *pamba* tied to the butt of a palm, or perhaps to a croton bush. *Na* means 'village', and *terari* 'to close up', as a creek is dammed up with stones, or as the hollow drum is closed at one end with the lizard skin. The Binandele word is *ao*, apparently a contraction of *ago* (another dialectal form): I cannot make any suggestion as to its real meaning. In Wasida the same object is called *itembari*, probably a compound of *i*, 'tree', and *tembari*, 'to place on top'. In Dobo-duru the word was *natembabije*: *na*, 'village', *temba*, 'to place on top', *abije*, 'ancestor'.

Some months after the man's death the *naterari* is set up in the centre of the village, and from this moment the coconuts are not eaten green but allowed to ripen and fall, until at last there is a tremendous accumulation, perhaps laid out in lines on the ground or else piled on a mountainous tripod. Meanwhile the *naterari* has been standing in the village clearing as if silently watching the slow preparations, somewhat weatherbeaten by now, and with its originally garish make-up a little faded. It is, however, treated with a certain amount of care and respect. It is not uncommon to see a

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miniature four-legged shelter to protect it from the rain, with a gabled roof of sago thatch, and perhaps underneath the roof a little platform. On this platform may be found an old bamboo cylinder pipe, a lime gourd, perhaps a handful of withered betel-nuts; and besides these a few fragments—fresh or mouldy—of cooked taro. These are so placed for the spirit of the departed, or, to use the Aiga word, the *sovai*. It will come by night and refresh itself to that extent which is proper for a spirit, or as a native will say, with a twinkle in his eye, taking no more than an ant might eat. In addition to these offerings, there may be found certain mementoes of the deceased—an old banana-seed necklace, a shell bracelet, in one case a broken gourd that had been a urinary for an invalid and bed-ridden old man.

When the preparations for the entertainment are complete the *naterari* is removed, and with its removal the coconut tabu comes to an end. Normally, it would appear, the *naterari* stands through the time of feasting and is removed afterwards. Sometimes, I am told, the provisions for the feast are displayed before the post—row upon row of wooden dishes piled with cooked food—and it is called upon to witness the feast in its honour.

There is still something of reverence in the final disposal of the *naterari*. When I suggested chopping it up for firewood I was made to feel that this was rather a bad joke. In the inland village it was put aside in the outskirts of the bush, sometimes with a small platform close by for a continuation of the food offerings, and there allowed to decay. On the river Opi it is placed, with other paraphernalia of the dance, upon a raft; with some little ceremony this raft is guided into midstream and released to follow its unattended course toward the sea. Sometimes the *naterari* is stowed away in a house. At any rate it is not simply thrown away and disregarded. For this two reasons are given: first, that the *sovai* or spirit would be angry; second, that the people feel too sorrowful to treat the *naterari* thus.

It is worth referring to the forms or patterns of the tabu post. The variety is very great, for each example seems to

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take shape from the individual carver's imagination. There is no such thing as a distinctive clan device; and there are no names for particular patterns. In one village a newly erected *naterari* of an unusually pretentious character had been recently substituted for another of inferior workmanship. The latter, though discarded, had not been destroyed. Both belonged to the same clan and village and were set up for the same occasion, but they were wholly different in pattern and appearance.

The treatments range from the very simplest of formal designs to somewhat elaborate representations of the human figure. The latter probably throw some light upon the former. For instance, the prevalent device of cutting through the post so as to leave two separate supports may be reminiscent of the obviously human-like legs of more elaborate figures. There are many *naterari* which apparently do not conform to the implied explanation, but nevertheless it may be said that many do show a slight, and others an unmistakable, anthropomorphic character. The sketches (Fig. 25) were made at various times and entirely at random.

Enough has been said to show that the *naterari* is very closely associated with the dead man for whom the feast is to be made. I do not remember hearing in so many words that the *naterari* actually represented such and such a dead man; but, if I may repeat what was written in Chapter VIII, the fact that the feast is definitely made for the dead man, the care with which the *naterari* is treated, the offerings made to it, the mementoes of the deceased which are attached to it, and the ceremonious way in which it is finally disposed of, would all lend colour to the suggestion that it is regarded as a representative of the dead and is in imagination identified with him. One could not go so far as to say that it was actually an image of him; but in view of its occasionally striking anthropomorphism, it is not impossible that originally the *naterari* was in reality set up as a crude model of the dead. I may give one illustration to show that this idea, or a similar one, has not been entirely forgotten. In one sketch primitively painted on one facet of a post, may be

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seen the figure of a man. The *naterari* was cut out, set up, and painted by one Bararipa, pending a feast in honour of his deceased father Komona; and the figure, by Bararipa's word, was a picture of Komona himself.

A further bond between the *naterari* and the dead resides in the fact that the tabu post is normally formed of the particular wood which is his plant emblem, and hence is likely to be his clan namesake.

The most interesting point in regard to the *naterari* is the fact that food offerings are made to it. Of this subject I shall speak at greater length when we discuss the belief in survival after death. In the meantime I may give an account of the dance and drama which have at least some significance as ceremonies of mourning.

FIG. 25. Examples of *Naterari*, or Tabu Posts

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incidentally, that the audience does not always thoroughly understand the action. I have been surprised at the diversity of interpretations placed upon one drama by different members of the audience. The plot was not divulged previously, and when the play had been performed those whom I questioned as to its story or meaning seemed somewhat mystified and, be it confessed, somewhat indifferent. 536

Disposal of Paraphernalia

Before attempting a general appreciation of the drama and the dance there still remains the last episode to describe, viz. the final disposal of the paraphernalia. This has been spoken of before as the last of the mortuary ceremonies (*vide* p. 224), and it usually follows the dance and drama, which constitute the penultimate ceremony, by a space of one or more months. A brief description of this rite will help us to understand the ceremonial significance of much that has been described in this chapter. Some time after the performance of a dance and play in the village of Horanada I received an invitation to witness the rite called *sirari*, lit. 'pushing away'. The *pipiga* costume of the *samuna*, his imitation spears, and his wooden phallus had been kept since the day of the drama. They were now placed on a raft with some cooked taro and pig, and a little boy (son of the deceased man for whom the dance and drama had been made) waded out pushing it before him into the current and there let it go. I was told that the *sovai* of the deceased, for whom the dance and drama had been celebrated, travelled on this raft. 536 765

On another occasion, which I did not witness, it appears that even the timbers of the men's house and all the *ando*, or costumes, of the dancers were put on rafts and sent down the river, the chief man crying out the names of the deceased for whom the dance had been held, and bidding them begone from the neighbourhood of the village. And obediently, I was informed, the *sovai* would go aboard the raft and drift down to the sea. It can hardly be doubted that there is some connexion between the paraphernalia of the dance and drama and the spirits of the dead for whom these ceremonies were performed.

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Ceremonial Significance of Dance and Drama

535 536 It remains now to attempt an appreciation of the dance and drama in respect of their functions and value, to connect them with what has been described in the previous chapters, and to place them correctly in the life of the community.

The combined dance and drama of the Orokaiva have, I believe, less real value as ceremonial than as art or play. However, we may for a moment ignore this latter and more important aspect, and consider what meaning—latent or otherwise—they may possess as ritual.

535 536 765 In the last chapter I implied that the dance and drama constituted a mortuary rite. Earlier it was suggested that they were in some degree or in some instances an initiatory rite, taking the place among the Aiga and Binandele of the *embabu* ceremony among the southern tribes. It seems probable that the set performance, combining dance and drama, sometimes fulfils both these functions together.

We have seen that the occasion of it brings to an end the tabu on the village coco-nuts, which was instituted expressly because of the death of a villager. The *naterari*, or tabu post, may be presented with offerings of food at the feast which accompanies the dance and drama, and it is made clear that these offerings are to the dead whom the *naterari* apparently represents. Before the dance and feast begin, the *sovai* or *binei* are hailed and bidden to attend, though information has not been entirely consistent on this point, some saying that the words are addressed to the particular individuals for whom the tabu was instituted and the feast is now being made, others that an invitation is offered to the spirits at large. In more than one straightforward instance, however, it appeared that the ceremony was definitely performed for one deceased individual; and in one of these instances it was affirmed that when the dancers began, the *sovai* of the deceased would 'get up and dance with them'. Again, while the ballet is going forward, the widows of the village wail and slash their cheeks, being reminded, it is said, of the time when their husbands danced and made merry. Lastly, when the performance is over, the para-

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(*a*) Puppet used in the Drama at Poho

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(*b*) The *Sirari* Ceremony

PLATE XXXIV [facing p. 254]

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535 536 765 phernalia of the play are stacked together, and so await a last ritual disposal, when the *sowai* of the deceased is bidden farewell. These facts, then, should be enough to show that the dance and drama can be regarded as a mortuary rite.

The actual significance of the rite remains a matter for conjecture. The native informant will say that it is celebrated in honour of the dead, who is called upon to be present and witness it, and to partake of the feast. It is plainly in the nature of a placation, and when it is all over it is hoped that the spirit will take his departure for good.

One is inclined to think, however, that it is the feast rather than the accompanying dance and drama that is the real act of placation. If this be so, what is then the function or significance of the dance and drama? One or two points of evidence have hinted at a possible explanation. An informant once told me that the spirit of the dead man for whom the feast and dance were being held would be present and dance with the dancers. There is again the queer practice of the widows, who, when the dancers appear, may break forth into lamentation and slash their cheeks and foreheads with quartz. They are said to be reminded of their husbands. It is as if in the semi-disguised figures of the dancers they saw their own men-folk returned from the place of the spirits.

The rite called *sirari*, i.e. the ritual disposal of the costumes, &c., of the actors and sometimes of the dancers, is not out of keeping with this idea. What remains of the *samuna* or of the dancer, i.e. his costume and paraphernalia, is put aboard the raft and abandoned, and it is said at the same time that the *sowai* of the deceased travels aboard the raft. It is difficult not to associate the two, almost difficult not to identify them. It might well enough be that the *samuna*, grotesque and foolish as he is, was in some manner impersonating the deceased, and that now the disguise in which he did it is being mentally identified with him.

There is something, moreover, in the secrecy as to the identity of the dancers and in the more or less complete disguise they wear—matters which have been already referred to (*vide* p. 238). These, together with a point of similarity

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535 536 765 in costume, have suggested a possible affinity with the masked dance of the Western and Gulf Papuans, and the suggestion here put forward—be it remembered, in an entirely tentative manner—is that the performers in the Orokaiva dance and drama originally impersonate the spirits of the dead, who foregather to partake of the mortuary feast.

The feast is the real act of placation. It is provided for the spirits, and in order to make the donors of the feast feel more satisfied that it is accepted by them, the spirits are brought on to the scene in the persons of the disguised dancers and actors. It may be repeated that no native ever placed this interpretation on the dance and drama, and that, in the absence of more telling evidence than I have been able to supply, it is intended for nothing more than a conjecture.

535 536 881 We have next to consider the dance and drama as constituting a rite of initiation. I regret that during the whole of my stay among the Aiga and Binandele there was no opportunity of witnessing an initiation, so I can bring forward only verbal evidence that the *ebamei*, or 'new children', i.e. the initiates, make their appearance together with the dancers, and witness the performance of a play. I have also been told that in some cases the initiate bears a minor part in the play, viz. that of a *buvivi*. At any rate, however, it may be regarded as certain that the dance and drama form part of the cycle of puberty ceremonies among the Aiga and Binandele.

The question is whether they constitute the essence of the ceremony, i.e. whether they correspond to the meeting with the *embabi*, which is the essence of initiation among the southern Orokaiva. Here again it may be remembered that no native has ever spoken of the two rites as corresponding, and the suggestion that the dance and drama have some initiatory significance is my own. It is based upon the following facts: (1) The dance and drama always form part of the puberty cycle. (2) In the dance the performers are virtually disguised by their costumes, and their identity is meant to remain secret, just as it is with the *embabi*, who are supposedly irrecognizable to the initiates. (Further, as I have just indicated, one is tempted to conjecture that the

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disguised dancers among the Aiga and Binandele originally represented spirits of the dead.) (3) In the drama we find the same kind of secrecy. The identity of the actors is not revealed, and the plot of the play is not divulged before its performance, nor does any one care to pry into these matters. Furthermore, in the drama there always appears at least one *binei* or *sovai*, i.e. spirit of the dead.

The gist of initiation among the southern Orokaiva is to bring the candidate into contact with the supposed spirits of the dead, and make him acquainted with the bull-roarer and the flutes which are the voices of the spirits; whereas among the Aiga and Binandele, who know neither the bull-roarer nor the flute, the candidate is, nevertheless, brought into contact with the spirits of the dead in the drama and conceivably also in the dance which accompanies the drama.

This interpretation of the ceremony, viz. as a rite of initiation, may be thought unnecessary in view of the other, which gives it a mortuary significance. It will be noted, however, that the two are not incompatible if there be any truth in the theory that the dance and drama bring forth impersonators of the spirits. It may be noted that, since the confinement of a batch of youths and girls is a comparatively rare occurrence, the dance and drama appear usually in their mortuary guise alone.

In fine the combined dance and drama seem to me primarily of a mortuary nature, but this may make them all the more suitable for initiation, an essential idea of which is, apparently, to bring the initiate into contact with the supposed spirits of the dead. For the present, then, I shall set down only this much as a conclusion, viz. that the dance and drama (whatever their real significance) constitute a mortuary rite, and possibly also an initiatory one, and as for their significance it is suggested that the performers in the dance, and at least the main actors in the drama represent spirits of the dead.

Aesthetic and Recreative Value

So far I have spoken of the ceremonial functions of the dance and drama. I now wish to draw attention to their more real, 'live', functions, viz. the aesthetic and recreative.

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'Had they but kept us we might have been good children who could work and make sago for them.'

Destination of Sovai

Where beliefs as to the nature of *sovai* are so confused and indefinite we need not expect to find a carefully formulated doctrine as to their habitat or destination. Nightbound in a lonely place, a native would feel positive that the *sovai* were ubiquitous, and if they abounded in one place more than another it would be in his own vicinity. But when his fears were calmed, he could expound some more specific theories, albeit not entirely consistent.

In the first place the *sovai* are felt to haunt the village they lived in as men. I have already given evidence of this belief in relation to the ghostly form of the *sovai* (*vide* pp. 270–2), and it appears that this haunting may be more than merely temporary. There is a custom called *peni*, i.e. 'gift-offering', in which a number of young men do a round of the village carrying a pig on a pole or some cooked food on a dish. Beating their drums as they go, they pause at every house and lay the pig for a moment on the verandah platform, or leave there a morsel of cooked food. This ceremony is a placation of the *sovai* which are thought to haunt the houses. Sometimes it is not the actual village, but the neighbouring bush that is inhabited by the *sovai*. Of this idea the most interesting illustration is the custom of *jage* or hailing, in which the *sovai*, being called by name, gives answer in a long-drawn inarticulate cry from the concealment of the forest.

It seems that in the main, however, it is the *sovai* of the more recently dead who are thought of as frequenting the village. The mortuary ceremonies are at least in part intended as placations of them; and when all due honours have been paid, the final ceremony, viz. *sirari* (*vide* p. 253), is apparently a means of getting rid of the *sovai*, or inducing it to leave the village for good and all. Thus, for example, at the conclusion of a cycle of mortuary ceremonies in the village of Suporosusu certain paraphernalia of the dance were placed on the raft and floated down the river

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Opi, and the chief man of the village cried out the names of those deceased for whom the ceremonies had been performed, and bade them go right down to the sea and there turn into *sovai* creatures, naming crocodiles, sharks, and water-snakes. After this, he said, the *sovai* would be 'afraid' to remain in the neighbourhood of Suporosusu.

It does not appear that the sea or the sea-shore is commonly regarded as the destination of the *sovai*, but there are, on the other hand, a number of definite localities belonging (sentimentally if not actually) to the various clans, whither their people are supposed to repair after death. Such localities are called *sovai-ta-na* or '*sovai* villages', and almost every one of the clans of the Aiga tribe could name its own. They take the form of some well-defined feature such as a hill, rock, or pool. The *sovai-ta-na* of the Samanahu clan, for instance, is a cluster of large rocks which constitute a small island midstream in the Kumusi. It is worth recording an incident associated with this place. A man was fishing nearby; when he looked up he saw the figure of a woman on the steep bank opposite standing in the conventional posture with staff held in both hands and resting on the head. He cried out to her, but she merely turned aside her head and remained silent. When he had repeated his call with the same result, he suddenly felt that the situation was an uncanny one, and returned precipitately to his village, where he found that a woman had died. No one questions that the man actually saw the woman's *sovai* (it is doubtful, indeed, whether an Orokaiva recognizes the possibility of delusion), and the incident verifies the character of the place. I may note in passing that when I visited these rocks the men who accompanied me showed no reluctance to land on them.

Another example of a *sovai-ta-na* is to be seen in the pool Monoda, which belongs to the clan Eugahu. In reality a stagnant backwater of the Kumusi, Monoda lies secluded amid heavy, dank forest, and is certainly dismal enough for a place of the dead. Natives would not approach the pool too closely, and when we disturbed a snake at our feet they would not interfere with it, but watched it glide rapidly down and disappear in the waters of Monoda itself. Even